



Further education and skills inspection handbook

Handbook for inspecting further education and skills providers under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, for use from September 2019

This handbook describes the main activities that inspectors carry out when they inspect further education and skills providers in England under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

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Introduction

1. This handbook describes the main activities that inspectors carry out when they inspect further education and skills providers in England under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It sets out the evaluation criteria that inspectors use to make their judgements and on which they report.
2. The handbook has two parts:
 - Part 1. How further education and skills providers will be inspected
This contains information about the processes before, during and after inspection.
 - Part 2. The evaluation schedule
This contains the evaluation criteria inspectors use to judge the quality and standards of further education and skills providers and the main types of evidence used.
3. This handbook is a guide for inspectors on how to carry out inspections of further education and skills providers. It is also available to providers and other organisations to inform them about inspection processes and procedures. It balances the need for consistent inspections with the need to respond to each provider's individual circumstances. This handbook applies to inspections from 1 September 2019 under the education inspection framework (EIF).¹ Inspectors will apply their professional judgement when they use this handbook.

Types of providers subject to inspection covered by this handbook

4. The providers we inspect under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and using this handbook are:
 - further education colleges
 - sixth-form colleges
 - independent specialist colleges
 - dance and drama colleges²
 - independent learning providers
 - local authority providers
 - designated institutions³

¹ 'Education inspection framework: draft for consultation', Ofsted, January 2019; www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-draft-for-consultation.

² Dance and drama colleges are inspected against the principles of the EIF at the request of the DfE.

³ Designated institutions have specially designated educational status under section 28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

- employer providers
- higher education institutions that provide further education and/or apprenticeship training up to level 5
- 16 to 19 academies/free schools.

Privacy notice

5. During an inspection, inspectors will collect information about staff and learners by talking to them, by looking at documents, records and survey responses and other recorded information and by observing everyday life at the provider. Inspectors may also meet with employers where appropriate. Ofsted uses this information to prepare its report and for the purposes set out in its privacy policy.⁴ We will not record names, but some of the information may make it possible to identify an individual.
6. Individuals and organisations have legal requirements to provide information to Ofsted as part of inspections. Ofsted has legal powers under section 132 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that relate to inspecting providers of further education and skills for learners aged 16 and over. Inspectors can 'inspect, take copies of, or take away any documents relating to the education or training' of students from the provider's premises. These powers also enable our inspectors to inspect computers and other devices that may hold this information.

⁴ Further education and skills: Ofsted privacy notice, www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-privacy-notices/further-education-and-skills-ofsted-privacy-notice. Ofsted will not publish any information that identifies an individual in the report but may name the principal, the chief executive or equivalent.

Part 1. How further education and skills providers will be inspected

Before the inspection

How providers are selected for inspection

7. To decide when we should next inspect a provider, we use the 'frequencies of inspection' set out from page 6. We also use risk assessment to ensure that our approach to inspection is proportionate, so that we can focus our efforts where we can have the greatest impact.
8. We use a broad range of information to assess risk and performance when selecting providers for inspection. This process also applies in particular to good or outstanding providers. The indicators include:
 - previous inspection records
 - self-assessment reports
 - performance data
 - destination data
 - information provided, or concerns raised, by a funding body, government regulators, employers, parents and carers, and learners
 - the views of learners, parents and carers, and employers, gathered through online questionnaires
 - relevant local intelligence, such as changes to leaders or structures
 - any information about significant changes to the type of provision and the number of learners in a provider
 - the size and complexity of a provider, including the number and types of provision, the geographical spread of education or training centres and any recent changes to these
 - the outcomes of monitoring visits or any other related activity.
9. We can use relevant information received at any point during the year to select providers. We will review this information regularly.⁵

⁵ 'Methodology note: risk assessment of good and outstanding further education and skills providers', Ofsted, April 2018; www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-assessment-methodology-for-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers.

Frequency of inspection

Providers judged outstanding

10. Providers judged outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection are not normally subject to routine inspection.⁶ However, a provider judged outstanding may receive a full inspection if its performance declines or if there is another compelling reason, such as potential safeguarding concerns. A provider judged as outstanding may also be inspected as part of our survey or research work, or through a monitoring visit.

Providers judged good

11. Providers judged good for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection will usually be inspected within five years of the publication of their previous inspection report. This will normally be a short inspection but may be a full inspection if information suggests that this is the most appropriate way forward, for example, if the provider's performance has declined. For more information, see the section on short inspections (paragraphs 122 to 152). A good provider may also be inspected as part of our survey or research work, or through a monitoring visit.

Providers judged to require improvement

12. Providers judged to require improvement at their most recent inspection will normally receive a full inspection within 12 to 30 months of the publication their previous inspection report. These providers will normally be subject to a monitoring visit before the full re-inspection, normally seven to 13 months after the publication of their previous inspection report (see paragraph 32).⁷

Providers judged inadequate

13. Providers judged inadequate will receive re-inspection monitoring visits, as outlined in paragraphs 33 to 35. These providers will then receive a full inspection (known as a 're-inspection') within 15 months of publication of their previous full inspection report. The major exceptions to this are providers that no longer receive their main funding or that have been removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and deliver only

⁶ The following types of provider are still subject to routine inspection when they have been judged to be outstanding: higher education institutions offering further education and/or apprenticeship training up to level 5; local authority providers; independent specialist colleges. In these cases, they will normally be inspected again within 6 years from the date of the publication of the report of the previous inspection.

⁷ When a provider has been graded inadequate for apprenticeship provision and the provider has had its apprenticeship funding terminated/ been removed from the register of apprenticeship training providers, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered at the requires improvement monitoring visit.

apprenticeship provision.⁸ From that point, neither a re-inspection monitoring visit nor a full re-inspection will normally take place. If a provider has apprenticeship provision graded inadequate and has also been removed from the RoATP, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered as part of the re-inspection monitoring visit and subsequent re-inspection.

New providers

14. We will normally carry out a monitoring visit to any provider that becomes newly, directly and publicly funded to deliver education and/or training.⁹ This funding may either be received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or through the apprenticeship levy.¹⁰ The monitoring visit will normally take place within 24 months of the provider starting to deliver directly funded provision. For more details about monitoring visits, see paragraphs 27 to 31.
15. These providers will normally receive their first full inspection within 24 months of the publication of their monitoring visit report.¹¹ When a provider receives one or more insufficient progress judgements at their monitoring visit, it will normally receive a full inspection within six to 12 months of the publication of the monitoring visit report. We may carry out a full inspection of these providers without carrying out a monitoring visit, where appropriate.¹²
16. If a provider has made insufficient progress in safeguarding, it will normally receive one further monitoring visit to review only its safeguarding arrangements within four months of the publication date of its previous monitoring visit report.¹³

⁸ See also ESFA guidance, 'Removal from register of apprenticeship training providers'; www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers.

⁹ This relates to providers newly and directly funded to deliver apprenticeship provision from or after April 2017 (whether levy or non-levy) and those which are newly funded to deliver education provision from or after August 2017 whether, adult education, 16 to 19 study programme or high needs funded.

¹⁰ 'Apprenticeship funding: how it works', Department for Education, 2018; www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work.

¹¹ New FE colleges and 16 to 19 academies that began to deliver funded provision from August/September 2017 will receive their full inspection in their third year, in accordance with pre-existing arrangements. They will not normally receive a monitoring visit.

¹² However, new providers that became newly directly funded for apprenticeship provision before April 2017 or other forms of funding before August 2017 and that have not yet received their first full inspection will usually receive a full inspection directly.

¹³ If the provider's only insufficient progress judgement relates to safeguarding and it then receives a judgement of reasonable or significant progress with respect to safeguarding at the second monitoring visit, the provider will not then have a judgement of insufficient progress. The full inspection will then take place within 24 months of the publication of the first monitoring visit report.

Newly merged colleges

17. A newly merged college will normally receive a full inspection within three years of the merger. This will normally be a full inspection. For inspection purposes, regardless of the type of merger, we view all merged colleges as new colleges.¹⁴ A newly merged college will not carry forward any inspection grades from predecessor colleges. It will have no inspection grade until the first full inspection.
18. Any newly merged college may receive a monitoring visit at any reasonable time. A newly merged college will normally receive a monitoring visit before the first full inspection if the overall effectiveness grade of one or more of the predecessor colleges was requires improvement or inadequate.¹⁵ These monitoring visits will focus on relevant themes about the progress of the merged college, including from the most recent report(s) of the predecessor college(s). Monitoring visits will normally arrive at progress judgements against these themes as set out in paragraph 25. The monitoring visit report will normally be published. Concerns about risks arising from this or other sources may lead to an earlier full inspection within the three-year window.¹⁶

Sixth-form colleges that convert to become 16 to 19 academies

19. Sixth-form colleges that convert to become 16 to 19 academies will be treated according to their most recent inspection outcome. Those that are outstanding will normally only be inspected if their performance drops or there is another compelling reason, such as safeguarding concerns. Those that were good will normally receive a short inspection within five years of the publication of their previous inspection report (but may receive a full inspection within that timeframe if risks are identified). Those judged as requires improvement will normally be inspected within 12 to 30 months of the publication of the previous report. They will normally receive a monitoring visit within seven to 13 months of the publication of the previous report (as set out in paragraphs 12 and 32). Those judged inadequate will normally be inspected within 15 months of the previous inspection of the converted college. They will normally receive re-inspection monitoring visits as set out in paragraphs 13 and 33 to 35.
20. A 16 to 19 academy/free school that is re-brokered (transferred to a new sponsor) for performance reasons will be treated as a new provider from the point of re-brokerage for the purposes of inspection.

¹⁴ This refers to mergers between colleges.

¹⁵ This may not apply if the merged college has already received a support and challenge visit or the most recent merger took place before January 2018.

¹⁶ See paragraph 8 above for the range of sources that Ofsted draws on for risk assessment.

Types of inspection

Full inspection

21. Providers that are graded as requires improvement or inadequate will undergo a full inspection as outlined in paragraphs 12 and 13. Inspectors grade the overall effectiveness, the types of provision and the other key judgements areas in accordance with the criteria and grade descriptors set out in part 2 of this handbook. Providers judged as outstanding and good may also undergo a full inspection if, for example, their performance has declined. Ofsted reserves the right to carry out a full inspection of any provider at any reasonable time.

Short inspection

22. Providers judged good at their previous inspection will normally undergo a short inspection. A short inspection will determine primarily whether the quality of education/training that learners receive is good. For information about short inspections, see paragraphs 122 to 152 of this handbook.

Survey and research visits

23. We may visit any provider, including those judged good or outstanding, as part of our surveys and research work, based on our national priorities. We may carry out these visits at any reasonable time.

Monitoring visits

24. A monitoring visit is a type of inspection that explores one or more specific themes. The purpose of a monitoring visit is to assess progress against these themes to encourage improvement and assess risk. We may carry out a monitoring visit of any provider at any reasonable time. Providers will normally receive two working days' notice of a monitoring visit, although they may be unannounced. They will normally last up to two days. They will normally result in a published report. Concerns arising from monitoring visits may lead to an earlier full inspection.
25. We will normally use one of the following progress judgements on monitoring visits:
 - insufficient progress: progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible¹⁷
 - reasonable progress: the provider's actions are already having a beneficial impact on learners, and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures

¹⁷ Note the references to insufficient progress judgements with respect to ESFA intervention in this guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers.

- significant progress: progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.
26. Monitoring visits follow a similar process to that set out in part 1 of this handbook, except where otherwise noted. Inspectors will make progress judgements based on the themes explored on that visit. They will use part 2 of this handbook as the broader context for monitoring visits.

Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded

27. We will normally carry out a monitoring visit to any provider that becomes newly directly and publicly funded, as set out in paragraph 14. This visit will normally be carried out within 24 months of starting to deliver the directly funded provision by ESFA or through the apprenticeship levy. These monitoring visits will follow themes. In each case, inspectors will review:
- progress in leadership and management in the first theme
 - progress in providing a high-quality of education or training in the second theme
 - progress towards ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements in the third theme.

The precise wording of the themes for the most commonly recurring types of new provider are as follows.

Type of new provider	Leadership and management theme	Quality of education and/or training theme	Safeguarding theme
Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision from or after April 2017	How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?	What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?	How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?
Providers newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision from or after August 2017 ¹⁸	How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose?	How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals?	How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?
New independent specialist colleges newly ESFA funded from August 2018 onwards	How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant learning programmes that are clearly defined and tailored to suit the individual needs of learners?	How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality learning programmes that develop their independence, communication and skills, and help them to achieve their personal and/or work-related goals?	How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?

28. We will adapt these themes to apply to other types of new providers as necessary to ensure best fit. They will still follow the format and approach set out above.

¹⁸ If an adult learning provider acquires apprenticeship funding it will then enter the category of a new apprenticeships training provider and the adult learning will be covered under a separate theme which will be the adult learning 'quality of education' theme.

29. For these new providers, inspectors make progress judgements by taking into account that the provider is newly directly funded and by considering the impact of actions taken to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours of learners.
30. If the provider has other types of provision, each type of provision will be covered by a separate theme and progress judgement.
31. If a provider is judged to have made insufficient progress in the safeguarding theme, it will normally receive one further monitoring visit to review only its safeguarding arrangements within four months of the previous monitoring visit.

Monitoring visits to providers judged to require improvement

32. We will normally carry out a monitoring visit to a provider that has been judged to require improvement. The visit will normally take place between seven and 13 months from the publication of its inspection report in which it was judged to require improvement. Inspectors will make progress judgements on the main areas for improvement identified in that report. The monitoring visit will result in a published report.¹⁹ Through the monitoring visit, inspectors will challenge the provider to improve so that it can become good by the next full inspection.²⁰ The report will set out what progress the provider has made since the previous inspection.

Re-inspection monitoring visits to providers judged to be inadequate

33. We carry out re-inspection monitoring visits to providers found to be inadequate overall after the publication of their inspection report, except when their main funding has been terminated and/or they have been removed from the RoATP and they deliver only apprenticeship provision.²¹
34. Re-inspection monitoring visit themes will be based on the main areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. Inspectors will make a progress judgement against each theme as set out in paragraph 25. The re-inspection monitoring visit report will be published. Through the monitoring visit, inspectors will challenge the provider to improve. The report will set out what progress the provider has made since the previous inspection.
35. The first re-inspection monitoring visit will normally take place within six months of the date of publication of the previous inspection report, if the

¹⁹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/inspection-visits-to-further-education-and-skills-providers-judged-to-require-improvement.

²⁰ If a provider judged to require improvement has apprenticeship provision graded inadequate and has been removed from the RoATP, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered as part of the monitoring visit.

²¹ If a provider judged to be inadequate has apprenticeship provision graded inadequate and has been removed from the RoATP, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered as part of the monitoring visit.

provider continues to be funded. A second re-inspection monitoring visit will normally take place within 10 months of the date of publication of the previous inspection report, if the provider continues to be funded.

Pilot inspections

36. From time to time, we may pilot different approaches to inspection. We will provide details for this type of inspection on a case-by-case basis.

Scope of inspection

37. We will normally inspect providers that have one or more of the following that they are directly responsible for:
 - direct funding from ESFA
 - an advanced learner loans facility from ESFA
 - adult education funding from Greater London Authority (GLA) and/or one of the mayoral and combined authorities (MCAs)²²
 - apprenticeship training provision funded through the apprenticeship levy.²³
38. Subcontracted provision that is part of the directly funded provider's responsibility is also within the scope of inspection. As part of the inspection, inspectors may look at any provision carried out on behalf of the provider by subcontractors or partners. Typically, visits to, or communications with, subcontractors are likely to include inspecting the direct contract holder's arrangements to quality assure and improve the provision.
39. Inspections will not include provision that the provider operates under subcontracted arrangements on behalf of other providers.
40. Ofsted reserves the right to inspect and grade any subcontractor and its provision as a separate entity against the EIF and this handbook.
41. Any provision that is part of a pilot scheme is normally outside the scope for inspection. Provision funded by the European Social Fund is normally outside the scope of inspection.

²² Nine combined authorities have been established so far. Currently the authorities are: Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, West Yorkshire, North of Tyne, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England, Cambridgeshire/Peterborough: www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-devolution.

²³ Further education colleges and sixth-form colleges will be inspected at corporation level.

Inspecting residential provision in colleges

42. We inspect residential accommodation in colleges against the national minimum standards for the accommodation of students aged under 18. The standards apply to 'institutions within the further education sector', as defined by section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which have residential accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds.²⁴ These inspections are separate from the inspection of the education and training provision of the college described in this handbook.
43. Our social care inspectors carry out these inspections. The approach is set out in the 'Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): residential provision of further education colleges'.²⁵ If a college is registered as a care home, the Care Quality Commission inspects the accommodation.

Inspection of religious education and collective worship in relation to Catholic sixth-form colleges

44. In the case of these colleges, the relevant Catholic diocese will inspect their denominational religious education, Catholic ethos and the content of collective worship. Our inspectors will not comment on the content of religious worship or on denominational religious education. Inspectors may visit lessons and assemblies in order to help them evaluate how these contribute to students' personal development and behaviour and attitudes.

What inspections will cover

45. On a full inspection, inspectors will make an overall effectiveness judgement and key judgements on:
 - quality of education
 - behaviour and attitudes
 - personal development
 - leadership and management.
46. They will also make judgements on each major type of provision offered, as set out in the table below.

Type of provision	Description of provision
Education programmes for young people	Provision funded through the ESFA 16 to 18 classroom-based funding stream for study programmes and traineeships for

²⁴ Further and Higher Education Act 1992; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents.

²⁵ www.gov.uk/guidance/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-residential-provision-of-further-education-colleges.

	those aged 16 to 18 and for ESFA-funded full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds enrolled in colleges.
Adult learning programmes	Provision funded through the adult education budget and/or advanced learning loans, including employability training for learners aged 19 and over referred for training by Jobcentre Plus. This includes community learning provision and traineeships for those aged 19 and over. This may include adult education provision funded by GLA and/or MCAs.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships at levels 2 to 5 funded by the ESFA and/or through the apprenticeship levy. ²⁶
Provision for learners with high needs	Provision for learners for which providers receive high-needs funding in addition to 16 to 18 ESFA funding for study programmes and/or 16 to 18 apprenticeships. Learners up to the age of 24 may be eligible for this funding.

47. Inspectors will take account of all types of provision within the scope of the inspection. They will grade and report on the types of provision. If the number of learners in a particular type of provision is low, it will normally be inspected, but may not be graded. Provision for learners with high needs will normally be graded if there are learners supported by this funding unless that number is very low.
48. The quality of provision for learners with high needs and with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), a much broader group than those attracting high-needs funding, will always be considered during the inspection of any type of provision.
49. Sector subject areas will not be graded or reported on separately. However, inspectors may use their subject expertise to contribute to the evidence base for types of provision and key judgements.²⁷
50. The lead inspector will normally confirm to the provider which types of provision will be graded separately.

Before the inspection

51. The lead inspector's planning will focus primarily on how inspectors will gather evidence of learners' experiences, to evaluate the different types of provision offered by the provider against the four key judgements of the EIF.

²⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-accountability-statement. Where a higher education institution provides apprenticeship training in one or more apprenticeship standards that includes a mandatory higher education qualification, the Office for Students may provide Ofsted with provider-specific information to inform the inspection judgement relating to the apprenticeship provision.

²⁷ In the case of monitoring visits, inspectors will use their range of expertise to contribute to the relevant themes.

52. Inspectors' evidence-gathering will be primarily made up of focused curriculum reviews or 'deep dives', including lesson/session visits, scrutinising learners' work/training and assessment, and discussions with learners and teachers/trainers. Inspectors may carry out some inspection activities jointly with members of the provider's staff.
53. Inspectors may plan visits to learners at work at their employer's or at subcontractor's premises and carry out inspection activities. These visits give inspectors the opportunity to hold discussions with learners and employers, to discuss learning programmes and to look at learners' work. Inspectors may carry out interviews/discussions with learners, employers and staff via telephone, video calls or webinars.

The role of the nominee in inspection

54. Each provider is invited to nominate a senior member of staff to act as the provider's main link with the inspection team. The nominee should:
 - have a detailed understanding of the provider's programmes and operations, including, where appropriate, those of subcontractors
 - be sufficiently senior to ensure the cooperation of staff at all levels
 - have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.
55. The nominee's responsibilities include:
 - providing information for the lead inspector to support inspection planning
 - liaising with the lead inspector and ensuring that documents are available, and that staff can attend meetings
 - briefing the provider's staff about arrangements
 - informing learners and employers about the inspection²⁸
 - attending team meetings, in particular the final grading/ judgement team meeting
 - coordinating feedback arrangements in particular at the end of the inspection.

Notification of inspection

56. Notification of all types of further education and skills inspections and monitoring visits normally takes place up to two working days before the

²⁸ Inspectors may identify a number of off-site learners and employers to observe and/or interview. The nominee should ensure that they are notified, as well as any other users and partners who inspectors wish to meet.

inspection unless the inspection is unannounced. Ofsted reserves the right to carry out unannounced inspections or monitoring visits.

57. We will normally notify the provider in the morning of the notification day and will email the notification letter. The lead inspector will then contact the provider, normally by phone, as soon as possible and by the following morning at the latest. The lead inspector should make sure that:
 - good communications and effective working relationships are established
 - the arrangements for the inspection are confirmed.

Planning for the inspection

58. As soon as the provider has been notified of the inspection, staff should draw together the information in paragraph 61. These should be working documents and not prepared specifically for the inspection. Inspectors should keep the review of documentation to a minimum. Providers are not expected to prepare anything extra for inspectors.
59. Inspectors should be aware that the provider will need to accommodate the inspection while still managing day-to-day operations.
60. Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with our policy.²⁹
61. To ensure that the lead inspector has a clear understanding of the scope and range of provision and information needed to plan the logistics of the inspection, the nominee will send the following information, as applicable, as soon as possible:
 - details of the courses/programmes being delivered and their mode of delivery
 - timetables for lessons/sessions/workshops or other learning activities during the week
 - a list of provider staff and a diagram of the organisational structure
 - the geographical spread of training premises and learners, particularly work-based learners and apprentices, according to regions or sub-regions
 - the names and location of employers
 - the names and location of subcontractors
 - contact information for key staff
 - the current number of learners in the following age groups: 14 to 16; 16 to 18; 19+

²⁹ 'Deferring Ofsted inspections', Ofsted, 2016; www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections.

- the current overall number of learners (excluding apprentices) at level 1 or below, level 2, level 3 and level 4/5, by subject area
 - the current number of intermediate, advanced and higher-level apprentices, according to age groups: 16 to 18, 19 to 24, and 25+, by subject area and by apprenticeship framework or standard
 - the current number of learners following employability programmes and those who have attended in the previous 12 months
 - details of learners who are on a study programme but who are not working towards a substantial qualification
 - the current number of learners following traineeships and those who have attended in the previous 12 months
 - the current number of learners on community learning programmes and those who have attended in the previous 12 months
 - the current number of learners with SEND and the number of learners for whom high-needs funding is received, and their particular needs.
62. To ensure that the provider understands the inspection process, the lead inspector will hold a telephone planning meeting with the nominee/most senior member of staff.
63. The lead inspector will use the telephone planning meeting to arrange how information is made available to inspectors. The provider should inform all subcontractors' staff, current learners, employers and other users about the inspection. It should emphasise that inspectors may visit any sessions involving learners either on the provider's premises or at other locations, including learners' workplaces or online.
64. The lead inspector will draw up a pre-inspection team briefing for the inspection team and the nominee. The purpose of this briefing is to focus inspection activity and identify areas for exploration, in particular the areas of the curriculum that will be reviewed through 'deep dives' (focused curriculum reviews).
65. Inspectors will select the curriculum review areas they will focus on (and associated inspection activities, such as which learners and employers are being visited). They will take into account a range of factors, including:
- the types of provision
 - the courses on offer, their subjects and levels
 - the relative performance on different courses
 - the number, spread and coverage of sites
 - the value of the provider's contract(s) with funding agencies or with employers
 - the geographical spread of learners

- the geographical spread of employers
- the mode of delivery and attendance
- information from the provider's nominee, learners and employers
- information from commissioning or funding bodies.

66. The team briefing letter will provide details about the start of the on-site inspection, including the location and timing of the initial meeting and any other relevant arrangements for the first day, including the planned curriculum reviews.

Seeking the views of learners, parents and carers, employers and staff

67. Learners' views are important to inspection. It is important that all learners can express their views to inspectors. This also applies to employers and any other key stakeholders. Inspectors will consider the views of learners, parents and carers, provider staff and employers. They will do this before and during the inspection. This may have a bearing on which areas of the curriculum they focus on.
68. Ofsted's online questionnaires, Learner View and Employer View, are intended to gather the views of learners and employers. There is also an online questionnaire for parents and carers of learners. Respondents are able to complete these at any time during the year. There is also a questionnaire for members of the provider's staff, which is only in place from the inspection notification stage. After notifying the provider of the inspection, we ask the nominee to tell all staff, learners, employers and (where appropriate) parents and carers of learners that the inspection is taking place. The nominee should ask them to give their views to the inspection team by using these online questionnaires.³⁰
69. Surveys of the views of learners, employers, parents/carers and staff carried out by the provider, funding bodies or other organisations provide evidence for the inspection and may indicate themes to explore further. They do not replace talking with learners, employers and staff during the inspection or views collected through our online questionnaires.
70. Inspectors will speak to a range of learners and employers, often as part of the focused curriculum reviews. This may happen face to face or remotely, for instance through a webinar or online meeting. We may use other surveys to capture views.
71. Inspectors will take account of views expressed to them by learners, employers, parents, governors, staff and the nominee. Staff and learners must be able to speak to inspectors in private to ensure that their responses are not influenced

³⁰ This does not apply in the case of monitoring visits.

by the presence of the nominee or senior staff. Meetings during the inspection are likely to include those with samples of learners selected by inspectors and open-invitation meetings.

72. The lead inspector will take account of any external views on the provider's performance, for example through briefings from commissioning and funding bodies.

During the inspection

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

73. Inspections and monitoring visits will be led by either one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or an Ofsted Inspector (OI) assisted by other HMIs and/or OIs.³¹
74. A full inspection normally lasts between two and five days on site. The number of inspectors involved will vary according to the size and complexity of the provider. Some inspectors may only be required for part of the inspection. How the lead inspector will deploy the team depends on the number of learners and sites, the type(s) of provision and range of learning programmes.
75. Short inspections (see paragraphs 122 to 152) normally last no longer than two days on site. The number of inspectors involved will vary according to the size and complexity of the provider. Some inspectors may only be required for part of the inspection.
76. Monitoring visits usually last between one and two days, depending on the scope of the visit and size of the provider. They will usually involve one or two inspectors (but may sometimes involve more).

Gathering and recording evidence

77. Inspections will normally begin with in-depth discussions with provider leaders and managers about the provider's curriculum to establish the intent of the curriculum. Inspectors will ask about what leaders intend learners to learn; what are the end points and next steps they wish them to reach through this; what are the key concepts that they need to understand; and in what order they will learn them.
78. Although meetings with leaders are important, inspectors' first priority during inspections is to collect first-hand evidence.
79. Inspectors will primarily do this through a range of inspection activities, grouped into focused curriculum reviews, known as 'deep dives'. These will

³¹ An Ofsted Inspector is an inspector who is not an HMI but is deployed by Ofsted in a variety of roles, usually as a team inspector on further education and skills inspection.

provide evidence of the effective implementation of the curriculum and its intent – but they will also gather evidence which may be relevant to the other key judgement areas and progress judgements. These activities will be focused on curriculum areas selected by the lead inspector (see paragraph 65).

80. These inspection activities include:

- direct observation of teaching, training and assessment
- meetings and discussions with teachers, trainers and other staff (in particular subject specialists and subject leaders to understand the intent and implementation of the curriculum)
- interviews and discussions with learners (these may happen in formal planned meetings or in more informal settings)
- scrutinising learners' work
- evaluating learning materials and their use by learners
- analysing provider and learner records, showing planning for, and monitoring of, learners' individual progress and destinations from their starting points when they began their courses or apprenticeships
- assessing learners' progress
- examining what learners know, understand, and can do and make as a result of their learning.

81. Evidence drawn from these different activities and focused on specific curriculum areas should provide valid, reliable and sufficient evidence of the quality of education and training when connected, combined and brought together.

82. Evidence from these curriculum-related activities will also inform the other key judgements: behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management.

83. Inspectors will also carry out other inspections activities to gather evidence for the key judgements. These may include:

- analysing documents relating to leadership and management (such as records about safeguarding or notes of governors' meetings), or personal development and behaviour (such as records about attendance or enrichment activities)
- analysing learner, employer, parent/carers and staff views provided through questionnaires and other sources
- meeting with learners, employers, staff, governors, board members, councillors, trustees, subcontractors, where appropriate.

84. During the inspection, inspectors will collect, analyse and record evidence and their judgements on paper or electronic evidence forms. It is essential that the

evidence accurately reflects discussions. Inspectors should identify clearly information that was provided in confidence. The evidence forms, together with any briefings, plans or instructions prepared by the lead inspector, and responses from learners and employers (in hard copy, online or other formats) contribute to the evidence base. The lead inspector is responsible for assuring the quality of evidence.

85. Ofsted has no preferred teaching style. Inspectors judge the quality of education by the ways in which learners acquire knowledge, develop skills and exhibit appropriate behaviours for work and success in life or study. Teaching staff should plan their lessons as usual.³²
86. Inspectors may visit employers, to observe learners' on-the-job skills development and speak to employers and staff.
87. Inspectors will not normally indicate which sessions they plan to observe. The team reserves the right to visit any learner or employer and may cancel or add visits to ensure that enough evidence is collected. Inspectors will not normally give feedback to individual members of staff following these sessions.

Observations of teaching and training

88. An important element of the inspection approach will be to visit lessons, workshops or sessions where teaching, training, learning and assessment are happening. Inspectors may often invite appropriate staff from the provider to take part in joint observations of these learning sessions.
89. Observation is primarily useful for gathering evidence about curriculum implementation and how teaching and training sessions contribute to the quality of education and training. Inspectors can use observations to gather evidence about how well staff implement the curriculum by looking at teaching of one or more subjects, and by triangulating observations with evidence collected through discussions with staff, learners, and, where relevant, employers, and through work scrutiny.
90. Inspectors will connect observation activity to other evidence for triangulation and as part of the focused curriculum reviews. Observation is not about evaluating individual teachers or trainers. Inspectors will not grade the teaching or training they observe. Instead, inspectors will view teaching and training across a sample of the provision to provide part of the evidence base to inform inspection judgements, in particular the quality of education and training.
91. Observation is also useful for gathering evidence that contributes to other key judgements, including behaviour and attitudes. Observation enables inspectors to see direct evidence about how behaviour is managed and how behaviours

³² For other myths relating to inspections, please see 'Ofsted inspection: myths'; www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook.

and attitudes are developed in individual learning sessions. This evidence will complement the other evidence that inspectors gather about behaviour and attitudes during inspection.

Work scrutiny

92. Inspectors may scrutinise learners' work across the provider and aggregate insights to provide part of the evidence for an overall view of quality of education, primarily around the impact of the education provided. Inspectors will not evaluate individual pieces of work. Inspectors will connect work scrutiny to lesson observation and, where possible, conversations with learners, staff and, where appropriate, with employers.
93. Inspectors may invite appropriate staff from the provider to take part in joint scrutiny of learners' work.
94. Scrutiny is useful primarily for gathering evidence about the curriculum impact of the quality of education. Inspectors can use work scrutiny to evaluate learners' progress and progression through their course of study. Work scrutiny will show whether learners know more and can do more, and whether the knowledge and skills they have learned are well sequenced and have developed incrementally. Inspectors will synthesise what they find in order to contribute to their overall assessment of the quality of education across the provider.

The use of data

95. Inspection uses a range of data that is available. Both before and during the inspection, inspectors will analyse the performance of the provider using the most recent validated data. Analysis may be at overall provider level and/or for individual subjects or types of provision. Although data alone will not lead directly to judgements, the primary data that measures success for each type of provision will provide important evidence for judging the impact of the quality of education.
96. Inspectors will evaluate learners' progress in relation to their starting points, based on their rate of learning, acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours and whether they have achieved their individual, challenging targets. They will also take account of data about the destinations learners go to when they leave the provider.
97. Inspectors will not look at internal progress and attainment data on GCSE and A-level courses where fixed-time terminal examinations comprise the entire assessment of the course. Similarly, inspectors will not normally look at predicted in-year achievement and attainment data more generally. That does not mean providers cannot use this data if they consider it appropriate. Inspectors will, however, put more focus on the curriculum and less on providers' generation, analysis and interpretation of performance data. Inspectors will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from

any internal assessment information but they will not examine or verify that information first hand.

The self-assessment report

98. Inspectors will use self-assessment reports, or equivalent documents, to assess risk, monitor standards and plan for inspection. If these documents are not available in advance, the provider should share the latest report/plan(s) with the lead inspector following notification of the inspection.
99. Inspectors will in any case, use other readily available information about the provider.
100. During the inspection, inspectors will compare their findings with the provider's self-assessment.
101. Ofsted does not require self-assessment to be provided in a specific format. Any assessment that is provided should be part of the provider's processes and not generated solely for inspection purposes.³³

Meetings during inspection

102. Inspectors are likely to have a number of different meetings with provider staff for different purposes. They will try to minimise disruption to the provider's regular business and to the inspection team's focus on assessing the quality of education and training. Therefore, meetings will be kept brief and purposeful.
103. Inspections will normally begin with in-depth discussion with senior leaders and managers about the provider's curriculum to establish the intent of the curriculum and quality of education. This initial meeting will also provide useful insights into leadership and management and other areas. There may be other meetings with senior leaders, including the nominee as necessary, as the inspection progresses.
104. Inspectors carrying out deep dives focusing on specific areas of the curriculum will normally meet with key curriculum staff. This is to understand its intent and implementation before carrying out their inspection activities to review that area of the curriculum. Other types of meeting have been referred to above in paragraphs 80 and 83.
105. The inspection team itself will hold meetings. They may be meetings of the whole team or between two or more inspectors. They may be held remotely via Skype or telephone or face to face. These may include:
 - an initial team meeting to:

³³ Ofsted will periodically write to all providers to request that they provide a copy of their self-assessment. Providers can send their latest self-assessment to fes.sar@ofsted.gov.uk at any time.

- brief the inspection team on the schedule for the inspection
 - clarify any queries about team members' roles
 - receive a brief update from the provider, including, if appropriate, an initial briefing from the provider's managers with relevant responsibilities for key areas to be covered of the inspection³⁴
 - a meeting for the nominee to hear the emerging judgements and identify any opportunities to provide additional evidence
 - a grading/progress judgement meeting on the last day of the inspection to reach judgements about the provider.
106. The nominee may attend some inspection team meetings, although they may not contribute to decisions about inspection judgements. By taking part in discussions about evidence collected during the inspection, the nominee can help to ensure that all appropriate evidence is taken into account. Any concerns about evidence should be raised with the lead inspector. The nominee will report to the provider's staff on the progress of the inspection.
107. Inspectors may hold additional meetings with the provider's staff.
108. The lead inspector will hold a feedback meeting for the provider and invitees to hear the key messages at the end of the inspection.

Reaching final judgements

109. Inspectors will discuss emerging findings with the nominee and, where appropriate, with senior staff.
110. The lead inspector will ensure that the inspection team agrees the judgements for full inspections using the descriptors in part 2 of this handbook.³⁵ The overall judgements will reflect all of the evidence considered by the inspection team. The evidence base must support the judgements convincingly.

Providing feedback

111. Before leaving, the lead inspector should ensure that the provider is clear:
- about the grades awarded for each judgement required³⁶
 - that the grades awarded are provisional and, although unlikely, may be subject to change through moderation and quality assurance³⁷

³⁴ Not all inspectors will necessarily attend this meeting.

³⁵ For monitoring visits, when grades are referred to, this should be understood to refer to progress judgements.

³⁶ For monitoring visits, when grades are referred to, this should be understood to refer to progress judgements.

³⁷ For monitoring visits, when grades are referred to, this should be understood to refer to progress judgements.

- that the points provided in the feedback, subject to any change, will be generally reflected in the report, although the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback
- about the main findings and areas for improvement
- that inspection findings may be shared with the Further Education Commissioner, ESFA, DfE, Ofqual and/or Office for Students (OfS) before the publication of the report
- about the procedures that will lead to the publication of the report
- about the complaints procedure
- where relevant, about the implications of the provider being judged as requires improvement or inadequate overall³⁸
- that, if the overall effectiveness or the leadership and management of a sixth-form college, further education college or designated institution are judged inadequate, this has implications for the college in relation to appointing newly qualified staff in future years.³⁹

After the inspection

Arrangements for publishing the report

112. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the inspection report and submitting the evidence to Ofsted shortly after the inspection ends. The text of the report should reflect the evidence. The findings in the report should be consistent with the feedback given to the provider at the end of the inspection.
113. Inspection reports will be quality assured before we send a draft copy to the provider. The draft report is restricted and confidential and should not be shared externally or published. The inspection process is not complete until the provider receives the final version of the report. We may share the findings of the inspection with the Further Education Commissioner, ESFA, DfE, Ofqual and OfS as necessary (that might entail sharing the draft report in whole or in part).
114. We will inform the provider of the timescale for commenting about factual inaccuracies in the draft report. The lead inspector will consider any factual inaccuracies identified by the provider and will make changes as appropriate.

³⁸ Note the references to inadequate judgements on inspections and insufficient progress judgements on monitoring visits with respect to ESFA intervention in this guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers

³⁹ See 'Induction for newly qualified teachers (England)', Department for Education, 2018; www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers-nqts.

115. Typically, providers will receive an electronic version of the final report before we publish the report. In most circumstances, we publish the final report on our website within four to six working weeks.

The inspection evidence base

116. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained for the time specified in our guidance.⁴⁰ This is normally six years from the publication of the report. Information must not be disposed of if we still require it.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance of inspection

117. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the code of conduct (set out in the EIF).
118. We monitor the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes. Senior HMI or HMI may visit some providers to quality assure inspections. Inspection evidence bases and reports are subject to quality assurance monitoring and moderation within Ofsted. The lead inspector will be responsible for feeding back to the team inspectors about the quality of their work and their conduct.
119. All providers are invited to take part in a post-inspection evaluation in order to contribute to inspection development.

Handling concerns and complaints

120. The great majority of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns arise during an inspection visit, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible in order to resolve issues before the inspection is completed. The lead inspector should seek advice where necessary. Inspectors should note any concerns raised, and actions taken, in the inspection evidence.
121. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection, the provider may wish to lodge a formal complaint. The lead inspector should ensure that the provider is informed of the procedures for making a formal complaint. Information about how to complain is available on our website.⁴¹

⁴⁰ 'Retention and disposing of information'. Inspectors can access this through the Ofsted engagement hub (internal only).

⁴¹ 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', Ofsted, 2018; www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted.

Short inspections

122. Providers graded good for overall effectiveness at their previous inspection will usually be inspected within five years of the publication of that inspection report. Most will receive a short inspection (see paragraph 11).
123. A short inspection will determine primarily whether the quality of education/training that learners receive is good. Inspectors will consider the provider's quality of education and/or training and the effectiveness of leadership and management. They will assess whether safeguarding measures are effective and if learners benefit from good-quality careers advice and guidance. Short inspections may also cover any areas particular to a provider that the lead inspector judges necessary.
124. In order to confirm whether the provider remains good, inspectors will use the criteria set out in part 2 of this handbook. They will not be expected to carry out a full inspection within a reduced timeframe but to arrive at sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the provider remains good overall.
125. A short inspection report will not give graded judgements for provision types. It will not change the provider's overall effectiveness grade.
126. Once a provider has received its first short inspection and is confirmed to be good, we will usually carry out a further short inspection within five years of the publication of the previous report. If risk assessment identifies any decline in performance or if there are any safeguarding or other concerns about the provider, we may carry out a full inspection.⁴² Ofsted reserves the right to carry out a full inspection to any provider at any reasonable time.
127. As with all other inspections under the EIF, the model of short inspections is designed to encourage constructive, challenging professional conversation between inspectors, leaders, managers and governors.

The purpose of a short inspection

128. The main purpose of short inspections is to evaluate sufficiently whether the provider remains good and in particular:
 - whether the provider's quality of education/training is good
 - whether safeguarding arrangements are effective
 - whether careers education and guidance are of a good quality⁴³

⁴² As at paragraph 11.

⁴³ Section 41 of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 requires that Ofsted 'comment[s]' on careers guidance provided to students in further education colleges, sixth-form colleges and designated institutions. The Act defines students for this purpose as those aged 16 to 18 and those up

- whether leaders, managers and governors have the capacity to make continued improvement and manage change well.

A short inspection will also take into account: any other aspect that the lead inspector considers particularly relevant given the findings of the last inspection report; issues identified at the planning stage; and the particular nature of the provider.

129. Inspectors will focus primarily on the quality of education during a short inspection. They will not expect to cover the criteria within the quality of education judgement in Part 2 of this handbook to the same extent as on a full inspection. They will focus on a number of key curriculum areas using deep-dive focused curriculum reviews to provide sufficient evidence that the provider remains good. This will follow the same approach as set out in the sections above: 'gathering and recording evidence', 'observations of teaching and training', 'work scrutiny' and 'use of data'.
130. A short inspection will be carried out by one or more inspectors over one or two days, depending on the size and type of provider.⁴⁴

Outcomes of a short inspection

131. A short inspection has three possible outcomes.
 - Outcome 1 – the provider continues to be a good provider. In these cases, it will receive a short inspection report following the report publication process).
 - Outcome 2 – the provider is at least good and there is sufficient evidence of improvement to suggest that the provider may be judged outstanding. In these cases, the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection.
 - Outcome 3 – the inspection team has insufficient evidence to satisfy itself that the provider remains good, or there are concerns arising from evidence gathered that the provider may not be good. In these cases, the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection.
132. Inspectors will always report on whether safeguarding is effective. If safeguarding is not effective, inspectors will extend the short inspection to a full inspection.

to the age of 25 who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. While the statutory duty applies only to the inspection of the above institutions, inspectors will inspect and comment in similar fashion on careers advice on short and full inspections of all further education and skills providers as appropriate. If there are no 16- to 19-year olds or those with EHC plans, the inspection may not cover careers guidance.

⁴⁴ This is one or two days on site. Additional time is also allocated for the lead inspector to plan the inspection and write the inspection report, some of this work may be completed on site.

Providers that remain good (outcome 1)

133. If inspectors judge that a provider remains good (outcome 1), they will confirm this judgement in the final feedback at the end of the short inspection.

Extending short inspections to full inspections (outcomes 2 and 3)

134. If there is sufficient evidence of improved quality to suggest that the provider may be judged outstanding, the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection (outcome 2).
135. If the lead inspector has insufficient evidence to confirm that the provider remains good **or** if there is evidence that the provider may no longer be good (which may include concerns about safeguarding), the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection (outcome 3).
136. In the cases of outcomes 2 or 3, the lead inspector will inform the provider by the end of the short inspection of the decision to extend the inspection to a full inspection.
137. For outcomes 2 and 3, the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection as soon as possible. This will usually be completed within 15 working days of the short inspection. More inspectors may join the lead inspector on site. This may include HMI and/or OIs. The inspection team will gather and evaluate evidence to make a full set of graded judgements against the EIF. The lead inspector from the short inspection will usually continue the full inspection.
138. A decision to extend the inspection does not predetermine the outcome of the full inspection. At the end of the full inspection, the provider may receive any grade on the four-point grading scale.
139. The lead inspector of the full inspection will contact the nominee and tell them when the full inspection will start. The lead inspector will share the team composition and deployment. The inspector may request further evidence and information for planning before the on-site stage of the inspection begins.
140. Between the end of the short inspection and the beginning of the full inspection following extension, evidence from the short inspection will be shared with the new team. The lead inspector and that team will build on the evidence to complete the full inspection, avoiding repetition or duplication.
141. The full inspection may move straight to evidence gathering, without an initial team meeting.
142. A short inspection report will not be produced when the short inspection converts to a full inspection. Instead, the provider will receive a full inspection report.

Inspectors' planning and preparation

143. The lead inspector will share with the inspection team:

- essential information about the provider and the timings for the inspection
- a short summary of any areas to be focused on, based on a brief analysis of the pre-inspection information
- a brief outline of inspection activity, including planned 'deep dive' curriculum reviews. This will be finalised on site.

Notification and introduction

144. We will normally notify the provider up to two working days before the inspection, unless the inspection is unannounced. Ofsted reserves the right to carry out unannounced inspections or visits. We will notify the provider in the morning of the notification day and will email the notification letter. The lead inspector will then contact the provider as soon as possible.

145. Leaders, managers and governors are not required to prepare documents or other materials for inspection. Inspectors will review documents and other materials that leaders, staff and governors use for normal day-to-day business. Any assessment should be part of the provider's usual evaluation work and not generated solely for inspection purposes. Inspectors will use what the provider has.

146. During the initial telephone call to a provider selected for short inspection, the lead inspector will:

- establish contact with the provider's nominee
- confirm the date of the inspection
- explain the purpose of the inspection, including the different possible outcomes of the short inspection
- indicate the likely format and timings of the short inspection
- request that the provider alerts learners, employers, parents and carers (where appropriate) and provider staff about the inspection. These groups will be invited to give their views by means of online questionnaires
- make initial arrangements for meeting or interviewing governors, managers, staff, learners, employers and others
- make arrangements to visit employers or subcontractors as necessary.

147. Inspectors may also request further information during the initial telephone call, by subsequent email or at the first opportunity on site. This information may include:

- information about learners, their types of provision, courses/programmes, subject areas and locations
- timetables for lessons/sessions/workshops or other learning activities
- a list of provider staff and/or a diagram of the organisational structure and key staff contact information
- the current self-assessment report or equivalent and any evaluation of the impact of actions taken to date
- recent data on learners' outcomes, performance, progress and destinations (but note paragraph 97 above about internal progress and attainment data on GCSE and A-level courses where fixed-time terminal examinations comprise the entire assessment of the course)
- lists of employers and subcontractors and their locations.

148. Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with Ofsted's policy.⁴⁵

Feedback at the end of a short inspection

149. The lead inspector will give oral feedback at the end of the short inspection. The lead inspector is responsible for managing this meeting and agreeing attendance with the nominee.

150. The lead inspector will:

- state whether the provider continues to be a good provider
or
- state that there is evidence that the provider may no longer be good or there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the provider is a good provider; if either is the case, they will explain that the inspection will be extended into a full inspection and the process for this
or
- state that there is sufficient evidence of improved quality to extend the inspection to a full inspection
and

⁴⁵ 'Deferring Ofsted inspections', Ofsted, 2016; www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections.

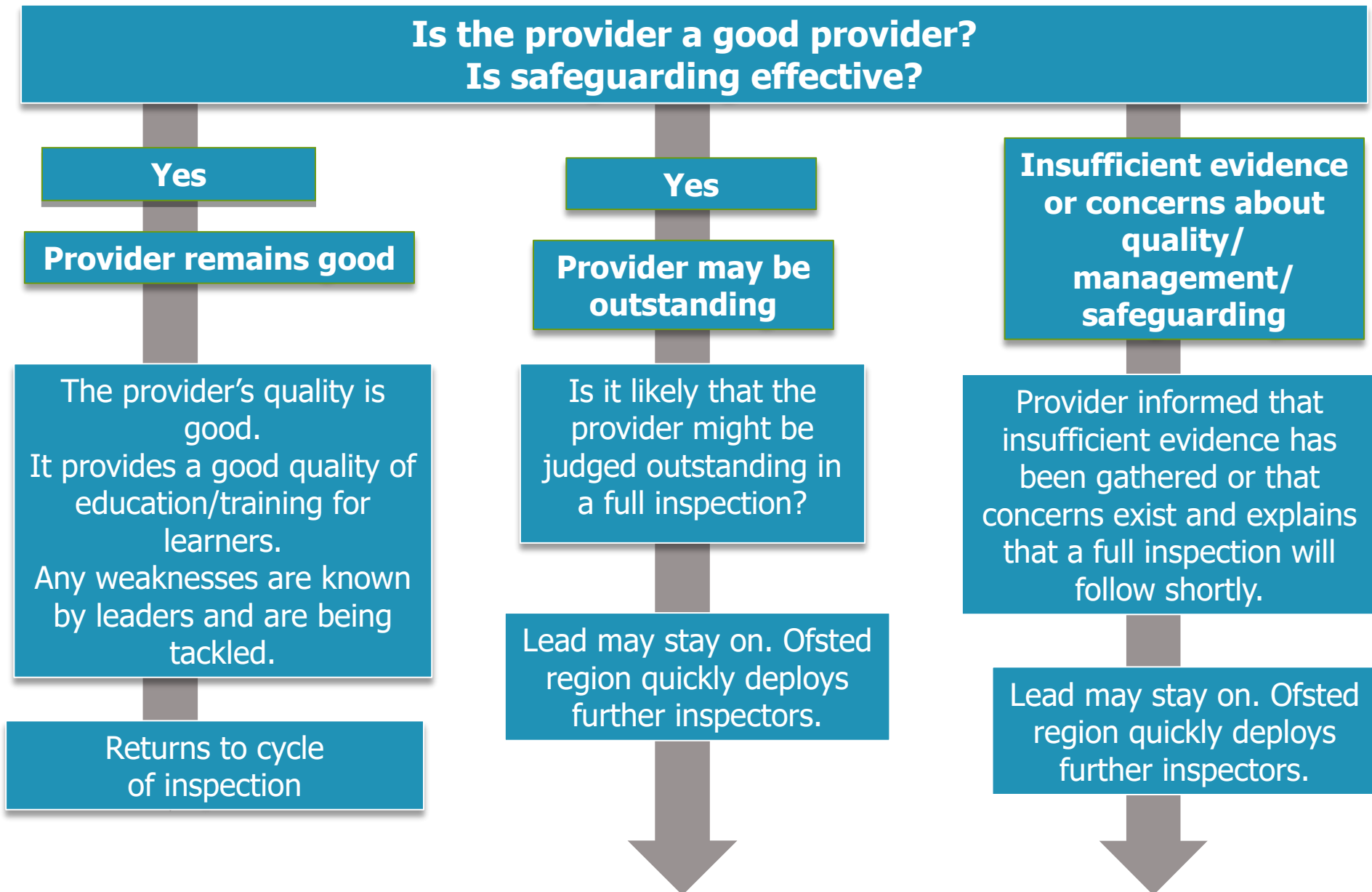
- make clear whether the provider's safeguarding arrangements are judged to be effective and provide feedback on other relevant areas covered in the short inspection (as outlined in paragraph 128).

Reporting on the short inspection

151. If the quality of provision is good, the provider will receive a short inspection report setting out the inspection findings. These will include statements that the provider is good, a judgement on whether safeguarding arrangements are effective, and a summary of what the provider does well and what it can do better. If the short inspection is extended to become a full inspection, the provider will receive a full inspection report as outlined above and not a short inspection report.

Quality assurance and publication of the short inspection letter

152. The short inspection report will be published on our website. Quality assurance and publication processes are the same as those for full inspection reports (see paragraphs 112 to 121).



Part 2. The evaluation schedule: how further education and skills providers will be judged

Background to the evaluation schedule

153. Inspectors must use the evaluation schedule alongside the guidance set out in part 1 of this handbook and the EIF.
154. The evaluation schedule is not exhaustive. It does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. Inspectors must interpret grade descriptors in relation to the type(s) of provision inspected and context of the provider.
155. In line with the EIF, inspectors will make judgements on the following areas:
- overall effectiveness
- and the four key judgements:
- quality of education
 - behaviour and attitudes
 - personal development
 - leadership and management.
156. We have created the criteria for each of these judgements using inspection experience, areas of consensus in academic research and our own research. You can find a full note of how the judgement criteria relate to the available research in our commentary.⁴⁶
157. Inspectors use the following four-point scale to make all judgements, including, where applicable, on the effectiveness of the different types of provision offered:
- grade 1: outstanding
 - grade 2: good
 - grade 3: requires improvement
 - grade 4: inadequate.

The evaluation schedule and grade descriptors

Overall effectiveness

158. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a learner at the provider. In making their judgements about a provider's overall

⁴⁶ 'Education inspection framework: overview of research', Ofsted, January 2019; www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-overview-of-research.

effectiveness, inspectors will consider whether the quality of provision is good or whether it exceeds good and is therefore outstanding. If it is not good, inspectors will consider whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.

159. In judging the overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of:

- the overall effectiveness judgement for each type of provision inspected
- the four key judgements.

160. Inspectors will first judge the overall effectiveness of each type of provision inspected. To do this, they will apply the grading criteria set out in the EIF. The section 'Evaluating types of provision' in this handbook sets out how inspectors will evaluate the overall effectiveness of each type of provision. The inspection report will include a numerical grade for each type of provision inspected. Inspectors will then grade the four key judgements. Where there are differences in grades given for a type of provision, inspectors will consider the following when awarding the grade for overall effectiveness:

- the number of learners in/the funding value of the relevant provision
- the impact of the weaker areas on learners' overall experience and quality of education received.

161. Inspectors will always make a written judgement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding learners.

162. Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors must evaluate the extent to which the education and training provided meets the needs of all learners. This includes learners with SEND and those who have high needs.

Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness

Outstanding (1)

- The quality of education is outstanding.
- All types of provision offered are likely to be outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, a type of provision may be good, as long as there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving this provision rapidly and securely towards it being outstanding.
- All key judgements are likely to be outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgements may be good, as long as there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving this area rapidly and securely towards it being outstanding.
- Safeguarding is effective.

163. To judge whether a provider is **good**, **requires improvement** or is **inadequate**, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- The quality of education is at least good.
- All types of provision offered are likely to be good or outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, a type of provision may require improvement, if there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving this provision rapidly and securely towards it being good.
- All key judgements are likely to be good or outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgement areas may require improvement, as long as there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving it rapidly and securely towards it being good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Requires improvement (3)

- Other than in exceptional circumstances, it is likely that, where the provider requires improvement in any of the key judgements, the provider's overall effectiveness will require improvement.
- Safeguarding is effective, or, if there are any weaknesses in safeguarding, they are not difficult to rectify, and there are no serious failings that leave learners being harmed or at risk of harm.

Inadequate (4)

- The judgement on the overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate when any one of the key judgements is inadequate and/or safeguarding is ineffective.

Evaluating types of provision

164. The following section outlines what inspectors will look for to demonstrate how the grade descriptors for each key judgement apply to each type of provision.

Education programmes for young people

165. To achieve comparability with the way in which we inspect and judge 16 to 19 provision in schools and academies under the EIF, the considerations below align with those in the school inspection handbook.

166. Inspectors will review provision for learners aged 14 to 16 enrolled full time at a college and provision for learners on traineeships aged 16 to 19 as part of this judgement.

- Inspectors will consider how well leaders and teachers promote high expectations for achievement and progress through the systems they use to monitor and develop the quality of provision for learners, including the most disadvantaged, those with SEND and those with high needs.
- Inspectors will consider how leaders and teachers develop or take on a purposeful curriculum that provides progression and stretch, as well as mathematics and English for all learners, including those without GCSE legacy grades A* to C (reformed grades 9 to 4), and also, where relevant, work experience or industry placements and non-qualification activities.⁴⁷
- Inspectors will review how well high-quality impartial careers guidance enables learners to make progress and move on to a higher level of qualification, employment, further training or independent living when they are ready to do so.
- Inspectors will use observations of teaching and training activities, and discussions with learners, teachers, support staff and, where relevant, employers, to consider how well learners develop personal, social and independent learning skills.
- Inspectors will judge how well learners achieve high levels of punctuality and attendance, and how well their conduct and attitudes, including in non-qualification or enrichment activities and/or work experience, prepare them for employment or to progress to higher levels of study and/or independence.
- Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding learners are appropriate and effective.

⁴⁷ Non-qualification activities may include tutorials, work to develop study, leadership teamwork, self-management skills and volunteering.

Adult learning programmes

167. Adult learning comprises a rich variety of learning and training, such as programmes for those with SEND, vocational training, employability training and community learning.

- Inspectors will judge, where appropriate, how well the curriculum, including the wider curriculum, for each strand of a provider's adult learning programme has a clearly defined purpose that is relevant to the education and training needs and interests of learners, and to local employment opportunities, and supports local and national priorities.
- Inspectors will judge how effectively leaders, managers and governors focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in education and training, and work with other partners to widen participation and support learners' progression to further learning and/or employment relevant to their personal circumstances.
- Inspectors will assess how well leaders and managers use community learning funding to develop learning programmes and projects that develop stronger communities, where appropriate.
- Inspectors will judge how effectively staff work with learners, employers and other partners such as Jobcentre Plus, to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment enable learners to develop personal, social and employability skills that prepare them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals.
- Where appropriate, inspectors will judge how well providers record and recognise learners' progress and achievements to inform teaching and support programmes to help learners reach their goals.
- Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable learners are appropriate and effective.

Apprenticeships

168. Inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers ensure that the apprenticeship curriculum meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.

- Evidence will include the extent to which the provider's staff engage with employers to:
 - complete the apprenticeship commitment statement
 - plan the initial assessment, training, assessments, review points and milestones throughout
 - agree any additional qualifications to be included

- monitor and support apprentices, including those with SEND and those who have high needs, to progress quickly, gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours and achieve to their full potential.
- Inspectors will judge how well trainers, assessors, coaches and mentors communicate up-to-date vocational and technical subject knowledge that reflects expected industry practice and meets employers' needs.
- Inspectors will determine whether apprentices acquire that knowledge effectively so that they demonstrate the required skills and behaviours that enable them to complete their apprenticeships, contribute to their workplace and fulfil their career aims by progressing to their intended job roles or other sustained employment, promotion or, where appropriate, moving to a higher level of apprenticeship or qualification.
- Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable learners are appropriate and effective.

Provision for learners with high needs

169. Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 explains the current arrangements for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.⁴⁸ The Act aims to encourage education, health and social care services to work together. Local authorities must describe the provision available to young people in the area by publicising the 'local offer'. A young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age
- a disability that prevents or hinders him or her from using the kind of facilities generally provided for others of the same age in general post-16 institutions.

170. Inspectors will consider the extent to which leaders, managers and governors use the funding for learners with high needs so that their individual learning programmes challenge learners to: develop their independence; improve their communication skills; make relevant personal choices and decisions; and prepare themselves for adult life.

171. Inspectors will judge how successfully learners participate in good-quality and individually tailored learning programmes that lead to paid or voluntary employment where appropriate (including to supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships) and/or to greater independence in their everyday lives.

⁴⁸ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/3/enacted.

172. Inspectors will evaluate how effectively leaders and managers coordinate all specialist support, including speech and language development, behaviour management, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, so that learners develop the skills they need.
173. Where appropriate, inspectors will determine the extent to which the choice of accreditation helps learners progress towards further learning, vocational training, employment and independent living.
174. Inspectors will judge whether procedures for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement are rigorous and purposeful and support the achievement of all learners.
175. Inspectors will determine whether staff are suitably qualified and/or have appropriate expertise to support learners or specific groups of learners. They will determine whether learning resources, including assistive technology, are to the required standard and specification and whether they are used effectively to support learners to overcome their barriers to achieving their challenging learning goals.
176. Inspectors will judge how successfully learners develop skills to enhance their employment opportunities and independence in their everyday lives in real-life situations, including meaningful work experience, and how well they take an active part in their local communities.
177. Inspectors will judge how well learners following academic or vocational qualifications make progress and achieve, compared with all learners on the same programme. They will also judge whether learners progress into appropriate paid or voluntary employment, further learning or other activities.
178. Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding learners are appropriate and effective.

Quality of education⁴⁹

179. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education that a provider delivers to its learners.
 - Inspectors will consider the provider's curriculum, which embodies the decisions the provider has made about the knowledge, skills and behaviours its learners need to acquire to fulfil their aspirations for learning, employment and independence.
 - They will also consider the way teachers teach and assess to support learners to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills.

⁴⁹ This covers the quality of education and training. Where teachers and teaching are referred to, this should be understood to cover trainers and training too.

- Finally, inspectors will consider the outcomes that learners achieve as a result of the education they have received.

Intent

180. In evaluating the provider's educational intent, inspectors will primarily consider the curriculum leadership provided by senior and subject leaders.
181. The evaluation focuses on factors that contribute to learners receiving education and training that enables them to achieve highly. These factors are listed below.
- Leaders and managers have selected and developed a curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners need in order to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences that prepare them for their next stage in education, training or employment. In this way, it can powerfully address social disadvantage.
 - It is clear what the curriculum is preparing learners for. It is also clear what learners will need to be able to know and do at the end of their learning or training programmes.
 - Leaders, managers and teachers have planned and sequenced the curriculum so that learners can build on previous teaching and learning and develop the new knowledge and skills they need.
 - The curriculum offers learners the knowledge and skills that reflect the needs of the local and regional context.
 - The curriculum intent takes into account the needs of learners, employers, and the local, regional and national economy, as necessary.
 - The curriculum ensures that all learners benefit from high academic, technical and vocational ambitions. This means that the curriculum should be ambitious for disadvantaged learners or those with SEND, including those who have high needs, and should meet those needs.

The curriculum

182. The curriculum sets out the aims of a programme of education and training. It also sets out the structure for those aims to be implemented, including the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be gained at each stage. It enables the evaluation of learners' knowledge and understanding against those expectations.
183. We will judge providers taking radically different approaches to the curriculum fairly. We recognise the importance of providers' autonomy to choose their own curriculum approaches. If leaders are able to show that they have thought carefully, that they have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing, and that it has been implemented effectively, then inspectors will assess a provider's curriculum favourably.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum intent

184. Inspectors will draw evidence about leaders' intent for the curriculum principally from discussion with senior and subject leaders. Inspectors will explore:

- how leaders have ensured that a subject curriculum includes content that has been identified as most useful and that this content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly for all learners to acquire the intended knowledge, skills and behaviours
- how leaders ensure that the curriculum supports learners' progression and provides knowledge and/or skills for the future (including non-qualification activity, where relevant)
- how learners see links between different areas of knowledge and skills and recognise that some knowledge and skills are transferable
- how carefully leaders have thought about the sequence of teaching knowledge and skills to build on what learners already know and can do.

Inspectors will also consider any documentary evidence that leaders wish to provide in the format that the provider normally uses. Inspectors will not request materials to be produced or provided in any specific format for inspection.

Implementation

185. In evaluating the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors will focus on how the curriculum is taught at subject, classroom or workshop level.

186. We will focus on the following factors.

- Teachers having expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach. If they do not, they are supported to address gaps so that learners are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching.
- Teachers enable learners to understand key concepts, presenting information clearly and promoting discussion.
- Teachers check learners' understanding effectively, and identify and correct misunderstandings.
- Teachers ensure that learners embed key concepts in their long-term memory and apply them fluently and consistently.
- Leaders and teachers have designed and they deliver the subject curriculum in a way that allows learners to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory. The curriculum is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what learners know and can do and learners can work towards defined end points.
- Teachers use assessment to check learners' understanding in order to inform teaching.

- Teachers use assessment to help learners to embed and use knowledge fluently, to develop their understanding, and to gain, extend and improve their skills and not simply memorise disconnected facts.

The use of assessment

187. When used effectively, assessment can help learners to embed and use knowledge fluently and to show that they are competent in applying their skills. The results of effective assessment assist teachers to produce clear and achievable next steps for learners. However, assessment is too often carried out in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff and learners. It is therefore important that leaders and teachers understand its limitations and avoid misuse and overuse.
188. Inspectors will evaluate how assessment supports the teaching of the curriculum, while not driving teachers towards excessive individualisation, differentiation or interventions that are almost impossible to deliver without lowering expectations of some learners and/or driving up teachers' workload.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum implementation

189. The following activities will provide inspectors with evidence about the provider's implementation of its intended curriculum:
- discussions with subject specialists, subject leaders and teachers about:
 - the curriculum that learners follow
 - the intended end points towards which those learners are working
 - their view of how those learners are progressing through the curriculum
 - reviews of curriculum plans or other long-term planning (in whatever form teachers and/or subject leaders usually produce and use them)
 - visits to classes, workshops and other activities, including observations of teaching and training
 - scrutinising work produced by learners
 - interviews with learners
 - discussions with teachers about how often they are expected to record, upload and review data
 - discussions with subject specialists and leaders about the content and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers, and what is done to support them
 - discussions with staff, including specialist staff, who support learners in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours.
190. In order to triangulate evidence effectively, inspectors will ensure that they gather a variety of these types of evidence in relation to the same sample of

learners. Inspectors will also ensure that the samples of learners they choose are sufficient to allow them to reach a valid and sufficiently reliable judgement on the quality of education offered by the provider overall.

Impact

191. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the provider, they will focus on what learners have learned, and the skills they have gained and can apply.

192. Inspectors will focus on the following factors.

- A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to good results because those results will reflect what learners have learned. There need be no conflict between teaching a broad, rich curriculum and achieving success in examinations and tests.
- Disadvantaged learners and learners with SEND acquire the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.
- End-point assessments and examinations are useful indicators of learners' outcomes, but they only represent a sample of what learners have learned. Inspectors will balance this with their first-hand assessment of learners' work.
- All learning builds towards an end point. Learners are being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment at each stage of their learning. Inspectors will consider whether learners are ready for their next steps.
- Inspectors will also consider whether learners are ready for the next stage and are going to appropriate, high-quality destinations.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum impact

193. Inspectors will gather evidence of the impact of the education offered by the provider from the following sources:

- nationally generated and validated performance information about learners' progress and attainment
- first-hand evidence of the progress learners are making, drawing together the evidence from the interviews, observations, work scrutiny and documentary review, described above (see 'sources of evidence specific to curriculum implementation')
- any information provided by the provider about the destinations to which their learners progress when they leave the provider
- telephone conversations or other similar discussions with a selection of learners about their destinations

- discussions with learners, for instance about what they have remembered about the knowledge and skills they have acquired and how their learning enables them to connect ideas.
194. Inspectors will evaluate learners' progress in relation to their starting points, based on their rate of learning, acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours and whether they have achieved their individual, challenging targets.
195. Inspectors will not look at internal progress and attainment data on GCSE and A-level courses where fixed-time terminal examinations comprise the entire assessment of the course. Similarly, inspectors will not normally look at predicted in-year achievement and attainment data more generally.
196. That does not mean providers cannot use this data if they consider it appropriate. However, inspectors will put more focus on the curriculum and less on providers' generation, analysis and interpretation of performance data. Inspectors will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from any internal assessment information but they will not examine or verify that information first hand.

Balancing intent, implementation and impact to reach a quality of education judgement

197. Inspectors will **not** grade intent, implementation and impact separately. Instead, inspectors will reach a single graded judgement for the quality of education and training, drawing on all the evidence they have gathered and using their professional judgement.

Grade descriptors for quality of education

For the quality of education provided to be judged outstanding, it must meet the following criteria.

Outstanding (1)

- The provider meets **all** the criteria for a good quality of education securely and consistently.
- The quality of education is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply.

Intent

- The provider's curriculum intent is strong. Throughout the provider and its subcontractors, teachers have a firm and common understanding of the intended curriculum and what it means for their practice.

Implementation

- The provider's implementation of the curriculum is consistently strong. Across all parts of the provider, including in subcontracted provision and

for learners with SEND and those with high needs, teaching and training are of a high quality. Training activities contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent.

- The work that learners do over time embodies consistently demanding curriculum goals. It matches the aims of the curriculum in being coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

Impact

- The impact of the taught curriculum is strong. Learners acquire and develop high-quality skills and produce work of a consistently high standard.
- Learners consistently achieve highly, particularly the most disadvantaged. Learners with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.

198. To judge whether the quality of education is **good, requires improvement** or is **inadequate**, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

199. **Note:** Some sections of the criteria appear in [square brackets] below. This is to mark that they are transitional only, because we recognise that not all providers will have had the opportunity to complete the process of taking up or constructing their curriculum fully by September 2019. We will review these bracketed sections before September 2020 to decide whether they should be deleted.

Good (2)

Intent

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious, appropriately relevant to local and regional employment and training priorities and designed to give learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- The provider is ambitious for all its learners, including those with SEND and those who have high needs, and this is reflected in the curriculum. The curriculum remains ambitious and is tailored, where necessary, to meet individual needs. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]

- Learners study the intended curriculum. Providers ensure this by teaching all components of the full programmes of study.

Implementation

- Teachers have expert knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise. Where relevant, teachers have extensive and up-to-date vocational experience.
- Teachers present information and/or demonstrate skills clearly, promoting appropriate consideration of the subject matter being taught. They check learners' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing this, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, but without having to use unnecessary, time-consuming, individual approaches to presenting subject matter.
- The work that teachers give to learners is demanding and ensures that learners build knowledge and acquire skills, improving on what they already know and can do.
- Teachers encourage learners to use subject-specific, professional and technical vocabulary well.
- Teachers work effectively with support staff to ensure that all learners achieve as they should.
- Over the course of study, teachers design and use activities to help learners remember long term the content they have been taught, to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts and to apply skills fluently and independently.
- Teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help learners embed and use knowledge fluently and flexibly, to evaluate the application of skills, or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners.
- Teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers and trainers select and produce – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the provider's ambitious intentions for the course of study and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning, independent living and employment.

Impact

- Learners develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well across all areas of their study. Learners make substantial and sustained progress from their identified and recorded starting points in each of their courses and, where applicable, across the curriculum. Where appropriate, this is reflected in results from national

examinations, which meet government expectations, or in the qualifications or apprenticeship standards obtained.

- Learners are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have gained qualifications or have met the standards to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the goal of their course of study. Learners with SEND/high needs have greater independence in making decisions about their lives.

Requires improvement (3)

- The quality of education is not yet good.

Inadequate (4)

The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:

- The curriculum has little or no structure or coherence, and leaders have not appropriately considered sequencing. Learners experience a jumbled, disconnected series of lessons/training that do not build their knowledge, skills or understanding.
- Learners' experiences in lessons or sessions contribute weakly to their learning of the intended curriculum.
- The curriculum does not prepare learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Weak assessment practice results in teaching that fails to meet learners' needs.
- Learners do not develop or improve the English and mathematical skills they need to succeed in their next stage, whether that is in education, training or employment or in greater independence.
- The attainment and progress of learners are consistently low and show little or no improvement over time, indicating that learners are underachieving considerably.
- Learners with SEND do not benefit from a good-quality education. Staff's expectations of them are low. Staff do not identify learners' needs accurately, and are therefore unable to support learners' development effectively.
- Learners have not attained the qualifications, skills or behaviours appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment.

Behaviour and attitudes

200. This judgement considers how leaders and staff create a safe, disciplined and positive environment within the provider and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of learners.
201. The judgement focuses on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to learners' positive behaviour and attitudes, thereby giving them the greatest possible opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. These factors are:
- A calm and orderly environment in the provider, classroom, workshop and workplace, as this is essential for learners to be able to learn.
 - The setting of clear expectations for behaviour across all aspects of provider life, including at work.
 - A strong focus on attendance at and punctuality to learning and work settings to minimise disruption, and so that learners gain valuable employability skills.
 - Learner motivation and positive attitudes to learning are important predictors of attainment.
 - A positive and respectful provider culture in which staff know and care about learners.
 - An environment in which learners feel safe because staff and learners do not accept bullying, harassment or discrimination. Staff deal with any issues quickly, consistently and effectively.

Learners with particular needs

202. The provider may be working with learners with particular needs to improve their behaviour or their attendance. When this is the case, 'behaviour and conduct that reflect the provider's high expectations and their consistent, fair implementation' are likely to indicate improvement in the attendance, punctuality and conduct of these learners.
203. Some learners, or groups of learners, who have particular needs may have weak attendance or display challenging behaviour. When this is the case, inspectors will evaluate the impact of the provider's high expectations, the consistent, fair implementation of policies, the support given by the provider to the learners, and the impact on the marked and sustained improvement of the attendance and behaviour of these learners.

Sources of evidence specific to behaviour and attitudes

204. Inspectors will use evidence gathered during the inspection as well as evidence of trends in learners' behaviour and attitudes over time. Inspectors will use first-hand evidence from visits to learning sessions and training workshops, including visits to learners at work or on work placements. Inspectors will also

gather evidence from interviews with learners, staff, employers and other partners, for which documents such as attendance registers may also be used.

205. Inspectors' judgements about learners' behaviour and attitudes are concerned with their attitudes to learning and, where appropriate, to work, and the development of the skills relevant to their learning programme. Inspectors' judgements also take account of learners' ability to demonstrate appropriate behaviour for the learning and the work environments. Inspectors will consider the main purpose of the type of provision when they prioritise the impact that each of the criteria has on learners' behaviour and attitudes.
206. The learner and staff surveys used in inspection contain questions about safeguarding, how respondents feel about the provider and how well supported and respected they feel in the provider. Inspectors will meet leaders to account for the results of the learner and staff interviews and surveys.
207. Inspectors will carry out other evidence-gathering activities that include, but are not limited to:
 - observing learners' behaviour in a range of different classes/workshops at different times of the day
 - observing learners' punctuality in arriving at the provider, to classroom and workshop sessions and to work
 - observing learners' courtesy, respect for and good manners towards each other and adults, and pride in themselves and their provider and/or employer
 - reviewing documentary evidence about behaviour, including how the provider tackles challenging behaviour
 - gathering the views of learners, employers, parents, staff, those with responsibility for governance and other stakeholders
 - gathering evidence about the typical behaviour of learners who are not on site during the inspection
 - balancing evidence seen during the inspection and evidence of trends over time.

Grade descriptors for behaviour and attitudes

208. For the behaviour and attitudes of a provider to be judged outstanding, it must meet the following criteria:

Outstanding (1)

- The provider must meet **all** the criteria for good behaviour and attitudes, securely and consistently.
- Behaviour and attitudes are exceptional.

In addition, the following apply.

- Learners have consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a highly positive role in creating an environment that values and nurtures difference. Bullying and harassment are never tolerated.
- Learners demonstrate consistently highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education and/or training. They are persistent in the face of difficulties. If learners struggle with this, the provider takes intelligent, swift and highly effective action to support them.
- There are many examples of commitment beyond the basics, for example high participation in skills competitions or social action projects.
- Learners behave consistently well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and consistently positive attitudes to their education and/or training. If learners struggle with this, the provider takes intelligent, fair and highly effective action to support them to succeed in their programme of learning.

209. To judge whether behaviour and attitudes are good, requires improvement or are inadequate, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- Providers have high expectations of learners' behaviour and conduct and these are applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviours and conduct.
- Learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They improve their attitudes over time. They understand their rights and responsibilities as learners. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Learners have high attendance and are punctual. This includes participating in any distance-learning activities, such as online learning and virtual learning environments.
- Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture where the principles of equality and diversity are nurtured. Learners feel safe and rarely experience bullying, harassment or

discrimination. If incidents occur, learners feel safe and confident to report them, knowing that staff will take swift and appropriate action.

Requires improvement (3)

- Behaviour and attitudes are not yet good.
- Learners feel safe and confident in reporting incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination, knowing that staff will take swift and appropriate action.

Inadequate (4)

Behaviour and attitudes are likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies.

- Learners' lack of engagement, motivation or enthusiasm inhibits their progress and development.
- A significant minority of learners show a lack of respect and self-discipline. Learners ignore or rebut requests to moderate their conduct and are not ready for progression or the world of work.
- Attendance is consistently low and shows little sign of sustained improvement.
- Incidents of bullying, harassment or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent.
- Learners have little confidence in the provider's ability to tackle bullying, harassment or discrimination successfully.
- Learners are not safe, or do not feel safe, at the provider or at work or subcontractor settings.

Personal development

210. The curriculum should support learners to develop their knowledge and skills beyond the purely academic, technical or vocational. This judgement evaluates the provider's intent to provide for the personal development of learners, and the quality of the way in which it does this.
211. As the provider is working with learners, those learners are also being influenced by other factors in their home environment, their community and elsewhere. Providers can teach and train learners how to build their confidence and resilience, for example, but they cannot determine how well young people and adult learners draw on this. Similarly, providers cannot make their learners active, engaged citizens, but they can help them understand how to engage with society and provide them with plentiful opportunities to do so. Providers

can take effective action to prepare learners for many aspects of life, but the impact of this work may not be seen until many years later. In this judgement, therefore, inspectors will seek to evaluate the quality and intent of what a provider offers and will look to see what learners know but will not attempt to measure the impact of the provider's work on the lives of individual learners.

212. The judgement focuses on the most significant dimensions of the personal development of learners that our education system has agreed, either by consensus or statute, are the most significant:

- developing responsible, respectful and active citizens who are able to play their part and know how to become involved in public life
- developing and deepening learners' understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance
- promoting equality of opportunity so that all learners can thrive together, understanding that difference is a positive, not a negative, and that individual characteristics make people unique
- promoting an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all learners, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, relationship status or pregnancy
- developing learners' character, which we define as the set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives learners the qualities they need to flourish in our society
- developing learners' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy
- developing learners' understanding of how to keep physically healthy and maintain an active lifestyle
- developing an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through appropriate relationship and sex education
- providing an effective careers programme that offers advice, experience and contact with employers to encourage learners to aspire, make good choices and understand what they need to do in order to reach and succeed in their chosen career
- supporting readiness for the next phase of education, training or employment so that learners can make the transition to the next stage successfully.

Sources of evidence specific to personal development

213. To inform this judgement, inspectors will use evidence gathered during the inspection and evidence of trends in learners' personal development over time.

Inspectors will use first-hand evidence from visits to learning sessions and training workshops, including visits to learners at work or on work placements. Inspectors will gather evidence from interviews with learners, staff, employers and other partners. Evidence will also include information provided through learner, employer and parent questionnaires. Inspectors will use a range of evidence to evaluate personal development, including:

- the range, quality and take-up of extra-curricular activities offered
- how well leaders promote British values
- how well leaders develop learners' character through the quality of education that they provide
- where appropriate, the quality of debate and discussions that learners have
- learners' understanding of the protected characteristics and how they can promote equality and diversity, and how they celebrate the things we have in common
- the quality of careers information, education, advice and guidance, and how well these benefit learners in choosing and deciding on their next steps.

Grade descriptors for personal development

214. For personal development to be judged outstanding, it must meet the following criteria.

Outstanding (1)

- The provider meets **all** the criteria for good in personal development securely and consistently.
- Personal development is exceptional.

In addition, the following applies.

- The provider consistently and extensively promotes the personal development of learners. The provider goes beyond the expected, so that learners have access to a wide, rich set of experiences that teach them why it is important to contribute actively to society. Opportunities for learners to develop their talents and interests are of exceptional quality.
- The provider ensures that participation in these activities is very high, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and all benefit from these opportunities and experiences.

215. To judge whether personal development is good, requires improvement or is inadequate, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- The curriculum extends beyond the academic/technical/vocational and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents
- The curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and, where relevant, help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- The provider prepares learners for future success in education, employment or training by providing: unbiased information to all about potential next steps; high-quality, up-to-date and locally relevant careers guidance; and opportunities for encounters with the world of work.
- The provider prepares learners for life in modern Britain by: teaching them how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremist views; helping to equip them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society; developing their understanding of fundamental British values; developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity; celebrating what we have in common; and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

Requires improvement (3)

- Personal development is not yet good.

Inadequate (4)

Personal development is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies.

- A significant minority of learners do not understand how and why to live healthy, positive lives.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance, through their words, actions or influence, directly and/or indirectly, undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance do not protect learners from radicalisation and extremist views when learners are vulnerable to these. Policy and practice are poor, which means that learners are at risk.
- The provider does not ensure that learners have access to unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality careers guidance, and opportunities to experience the world of work.

Leadership and management

216. Inspectors will look at the work of principals, chief executives, senior leaders, subject leaders and others with leadership and management roles when reaching this judgement.⁵⁰
217. This judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education and training delivered by the provider have a positive impact on all learners, including those with SEND and those who have high needs. It focuses on the areas in which inspection evidence and research show that leaders and managers can have the strongest impact on the quality of education and training provided. Important factors include:
- leaders' high expectations of all learners and the extent to which these are embodied in day-to-day interactions with and support for learners
 - the extent to which leaders focus their attention on the education and training they provide, leading to better outcomes for learners and continued and sustainable improvement
 - whether continuing professional development for teachers, trainers and other staff is aligned with the curriculum, and the extent to which this develops teachers' subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge over time, so that they deliver high-quality education and training
 - the extent to which leaders ensure that learners benefit from effective teaching and high expectations in classrooms, in workshops, at work or with subcontractors
 - whether leaders engage with learners, parents, their community and employers to plan and support the education and training that learners get
 - the extent to which leaders consider the workload and well-being of their staff, while also developing and strengthening the quality of the workforce
 - the extent to which leaders' and managers' high ambitions are for all learners, including those who are difficult to engage
 - whether leaders and those responsible for governance understand their respective roles and carry these out to enhance the effectiveness of the provider.

Governance

218. Inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of those responsible for governance. They will determine whether they provide confident, strategic

⁵⁰ Research suggests that leadership and management can be highly effective when it is shared by different individuals and distributed across different levels across a provider.

leadership and create strong accountability for, and oversight and assurance of, educational performance to ensure continuous and sustainable improvement.

219. Inspectors should consider whether those responsible for governance:

- know the provider and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- support and strengthen the provider's leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction
- ensure that the provider meets its statutory responsibilities
- provide challenge and hold senior leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems.

220. Inspectors will satisfy themselves that those responsible for governance understand their responsibilities and are ensuring that these are carried out appropriately within the provider. They are not expected to review a list of duties with inspectors.

College groups and governance arrangements

221. Many providers cooperate as groups, with an overall board and chief executive officer, or similar arrangement. These assume some or all of the responsibilities formerly shouldered by the individual college's/provider's governing body. In these providers, inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of the overall board and its staff as well as the college's/provider's local board, committee or governing body, to which there are relevant delegated responsibilities.

Safeguarding

222. Inspectors will always take into account how well providers help and protect young people and learners so that they are kept safe.⁵¹ Although inspectors will not provide a separate numerical grade for this, they will always make a written judgement in the leadership and management section of the inspection report about whether the arrangements for safeguarding young people and learners are effective.

223. If safeguarding is ineffective, this is likely to lead to a judgement of inadequate leadership and management. Safeguarding is ineffective when:

- learners' behaviour towards each other is unsafe, putting learners at risk of harm

⁵¹ Inspectors should also take into account the provider's safeguarding of any young people below the age of 16 who may be on the premises of a provider, even when the quality of their education is not within the scope of inspection.

- incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, either direct or indirect, are common
- learners have little confidence that the provider will address concerns about their safety, including concerns about the risk of abuse
- learners or particular groups of learners do not feel safe in the provider, the workplace or in a subcontractor's premises
- leaders and managers do not handle safeguarding allegations about staff members and learners appropriately
- leaders fail to protect learners from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism in accordance with the 'Prevent' duty guidance.⁵²

224. However, there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to judge a provider as requires improvement, rather than inadequate, when there are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right.

225. 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings'⁵³ sets out the approach inspectors should take to inspecting safeguarding in all providers covered by the EIF. This should be read alongside the framework and this handbook.

Sources of evidence specific to leadership and management

226. Inspectors will gather a range of evidence from meetings with leaders, managers and governors and first-hand evidence of their work across the provider, including in subcontracted provision.

227. Inspectors will use documentary evidence that the provider supplies to evaluate the impact of the work of leaders, managers and governors, both currently and over time. They will use this in conjunction with first-hand evidence. This includes, but is not limited to:

- meetings with leaders and those responsible for governance, to evaluate how well they fulfil their statutory duties, including, for example, the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty and the Children and Families Act
- documentary evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the provision for all learners and its continuous and sustainable improvement
- interviews with staff and learners to evidence how well leaders have created a positive culture
- first-hand evidence gathered during the inspection

⁵² www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance.

⁵³ 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings', Ofsted, August 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015.

- responses to the staff, learner, employer and parent/carer questionnaires. These will be particularly useful for judging the culture that leaders and managers have established
- any evidence the provider has from regularly surveying the staff and the way in which leaders and managers have responded to concerns raised by staff, parents or employers
- considering the overall aims of bodies giving strategic direction to providers on skills and economic needs, such as mayoral and combined authorities for devolved adult education.

Grade descriptors for leadership and management

228. For the leadership and management of a provider to be judged outstanding, it must meet the following criteria.

Outstanding (1)

- The provider meets **all** the criteria for good leadership and management securely and consistently.
- The leadership and management are exceptional.

In addition, the following apply.

- Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers' subject, vocational, technical, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge builds and develops consistently over time and improves the quality of education provided to learners.
- Leaders' engagement with learners, employers, parents and the local community/economy is very effective. They provide clear and direct evidence of the positive impact of how this engagement benefits learners and ensures continuous and sustainable improvement.
- Leaders ensure that regular, frequent and meaningful engagement takes place with staff at all levels, so that they can be confident that issues will be identified. When issues are identified – in particular about workload – leaders deal with them consistently, appropriately and quickly.
- Staff consistently report high levels of support for well-being issues.

229. To judge whether leadership and management are good, requires improvement or inadequate, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.
- Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject and teaching knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge and up-to-date vocational expertise of staff build and improve over time.
- Leaders ensure that all learners, including those with SEND and high needs, and disadvantaged learners, get the information, advice, guidance and support to achieve their next steps and progress to positive destinations. Leaders provide the support for staff to make this possible.
- Leaders engage effectively with their community, including, where relevant, with parents/carers, employers, local services and organisations responsible for local and regional economic planning.
- Leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff, including their workload
- Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education and training and help to ensure continuous and sustainable improvement.
- Those responsible for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its legal duties and responsibilities. These include, for example, those under the Equality Act 2010, and those in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safeguarding.
- Leaders protect staff from harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- The provider has an effective culture of safeguarding that enables staff to: identify, help and protect learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming, exploitation, radicalisation or extremism; help learners to reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help; and manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults and learners who may be a risk to other learners and vulnerable adults.

Requires improvement (3)

- Leadership and management are not yet good.
- Safeguarding is effective. If any weaknesses in safeguarding exist, these are not difficult to rectify, and there are no serious failings that leave learners being harmed or at risk of harm.

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:

- Leaders are not doing enough to tackle a poor quality of education or training. This significantly impairs the progress of learners, including the most disadvantaged, learners with SEND and those who have high needs.
- Leaders are not aware of, or do not take effective action to stem, the decline in the quality of provision.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of learners, employers, the local community or local and regional economies. This is reflected in the low proportion of learners who progress to destinations relevant to their career or learning aims.
- The curriculum does not equip learners with the skills, knowledge or understanding required to prepare them for life in modern Britain or enable them to progress to their next steps.
- Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance, through their words, actions or influence, directly and/or indirectly undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity. They do not prevent discriminatory behaviour or prejudiced actions and views.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners do not meet statutory requirements and do not protect learners, or the provider takes insufficient action to remedy weaknesses following a serious failure of safeguarding arrangements.
- Leaders, managers and governors are not protecting learners from radicalisation and extremist views. Policy and practice are poor, which means that learners are at risk.



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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
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